

of the proportions of refugees living outside camps range as high as sixty percent in some host areas. Although local authorities and the host government often try to control where refugees live, it is more apt to think about settlement as a fluid process, in which refugees move into and out of organized settlements, their movements influenced by their own decisions and coping strategies, by local socioeconomic conditions and by local authorities. Refugees leave the camps to find work, to trade, to explore repatriation options, to join the rebels, to visit the city. They return to the camps during the hungry season, or when there are security threats outside. Within one extended refugee family, the workers might live in the local community where they can farm or find income, and the dependents (elderly, mothers and children) might live in the camp where they can be taken care of.

Refugees are thus never fully separated from the local community. In most RPAs, there is a history of migration and mingling between the refugees and their hosts. For example, in northwestern Tanzania, the town of Kigoma and the Lake Tanganyika shore have long been target areas of migration for Congolese on the other side of the lake. Refugees and locals mix together for purposes of trade, marriage, entertainment, seasonal work. Local people use refugee settlements for the health facilities and markets. This commingling of refugees with local communities means that what affects the camps will have consequences for the communities surrounding them.

2) *Economic changes*

Refugees bring resources with them (labor, goods, even new technologies) and they impose economic burdens on their hosts. When international assistance programs appear, even more significant economic changes are wrought in the region. Entire new economies can manifest themselves. Infrastructural changes occur, as roads and bridges are upgraded to truck in supplies, camps are constructed with new market opportunities, and changes occur in the prices of local goods. The recent literature on war economies¹⁹ can be expanded to address what we might call 'refugee economies'; currently relatively little research has been done on this subject.²⁰

The presence of refugees, or refugee camps, can disrupt economic activities of interest to particular actors in the region, which can then lead to security problems for refugees. For example, in recent years, parts of the Thai-Burmese border area have become of great economic interest to the Burmese and Thai governments as a result of the logging concessions in the region and the gas pipeline currently under construction there. The Mon refugee camps in the south were considered by the Burmese and Thai governments as a hindrance and disruptive to the economic viability of the area. As a consequence, the Mon leadership was put under tremendous pressure to sign a ceasefire agreement and to relocate the refugees to designated sites across the border in Burma. This relocation was completed between October 1995 and April 1996 in the absence of any political settlement and without any international agreement providing for voluntary return, monitoring, or relief and reintegration assistance. At the same time, new Mon refugees were still arriving in Thailand, fleeing human rights abuses in Burma.²¹

3) *Sociopolitical changes*

¹⁹ See for example, a forthcoming ICRC publication entitled 'War, Money and Survival'.

²⁰ See Mark Cutts, "The Economics of Survival in Refugee Camps," UNHCR Policy Research Unit, 3 August, 1999.

²¹ McCann, J. "Use of UNHCR guidelines for the protection of refugees from Burma: a more practical collaboration with NGOs needed," *Refugee Participation Network* 22, October 1996.